

ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

DIVISION OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES



NEWS RELEASE

Cora Campbell, Commissioner
Jeff Regnart, Director



Contact:
Thomas Sheridan, Seine Area Management Biologist
Jeremy Botz, Gillnet Area Management Biologist
Amanda Wiese, Assistant Area Management Biologist
Phone: (907) 424-3212 Fax: (907) 424-3235

Prince William Sound Area Office
401 Railroad Avenue, PO Box 669
Cordova, AK 99574-0669

Date Issued: Saturday, August 11, 2012
Time: 2:00 pm

Prince William Sound Salmon Fishery News Release #52

This News Release is being reissued to correct a date error pertaining to the AFK Hatchery HEEZ closure in the Southwestern District.

BERING RIVER DISTRICT: The Bering River District will open at 7:00 am on Monday, August 13 for a 36-hour period. For the week ending August 4, the Bering River District survey count was 2,255 versus a minimum anticipated goal of 6,595 sockeye salmon. During this survey, observational conditions for Bering River District systems were fair. Another survey of the Bering River District is anticipated to be flown next week.

COPPER RIVER DISTRICT: The Copper River District will open at 7:00 am on Monday, August 13 for a 36-hour period. Harvest from the 36-hour period that closed on Friday, August 10 was 100 coho and < 100 sockeye salmon with 3 deliveries reported. The Gulkana Hatchery sockeye salmon harvest contribution from the fishing period that closed on July 27 was 16%. For the week ending August 11, the Copper River Delta survey count was 26,500 sockeye and 1,300 coho salmon versus minimum anticipated goals of 25,000 sockeye and 2,000 coho salmon. During this survey, observational conditions on the Copper River Delta were fair. An aerial survey of the Copper River Delta is anticipated to be flown next week.

ESHAMY DISTRICT: The Eshamy District within the Main Bay Subdistrict and MBH THA and SHA, excluding the AGZ, will open to commercial gillnet harvest for a **12-hour period** starting at 8:00 am on Monday, August 13. The AGZ will open to SET GILLNET permit holders only during this fishing period. **An opening within Eshamy Bay is anticipated next week concurrent with the Coghill District fishery, with date and duration to be determined on Monday's announcement.** Harvest from the fishing period that closed Friday, August 10 was 300 sockeye and 2,700 pink salmon with 15 deliveries reported. To avoid damage to hatchery equipment during this fishing period, please exercise caution when operating around hatchery gear deployed in the MBH AGZ.

PRINCE WILLIAM SOUND SEINE FISHERIES: Updated harvest information for recent fisheries targeting PWSAC enhanced pink salmon are as follows: approximately 2.35 million pink salmon were harvested in Prince William Sound on Saturday, August 4; approximately 1.3 million pink salmon on Sunday, August 5; approximately 900,000 pink salmon on Monday, August 6; and approximately 1.4 million pink salmon on Wednesday, August 8. Preliminary harvest reports suggest that approximately 1 million pink salmon were harvested in Prince William Sound on Friday, August 10. District-specific harvest estimates for the August 10 fishery were not available at the time of this news release.

VFDA has recommended standing down in Port Valdez to allow for the accumulation of pink salmon needed for broodstock and does not anticipate recommending a Port Valdez pink salmon clean up fishery at this time.

PWSAC reports the following pink salmon broodstock entry progress through August 11: up to 150,000 fish at AFK; up to 100,000 fish at WNH; and up to 55,000 fish at CCH. Through August 11, PWSAC would expect the following brood collection progress: 81,000 fish at AFK; 96,000 fish at WNH; and 128,000 fish at CCH. Area is being restricted for the next fishing period in Unakwik Inlet until an aerial survey of CCH can be flown today to further evaluate CCH broodstock entry progress. Time and area for future CPF openings will be based on PWSAC broodstock entry progress and wild stock escapement indices.

COGHILL DISTRICT: The Coghill District, **excluding waters of the WNH THA and SHA**, will open to commercial drift gillnet and purse seine harvest for a 14-hour commercial fishing period beginning at 7:00 am and ending at 9:00 pm on Sunday, August 12. **Waters inside the Bettles Bay, Hummer Bay and Pigot Bay Salmon Harvest Task Force (SHTF) Markers will be closed for this fishing period.**

EASTERN DISTRICT: Waters of the Eastern District, south of a line from Entrance Point to Potato Point, will open to commercial fishing for a 14-hour fishing period beginning at 7:00 am and ending at 9:00 pm on Sunday, August 12. **Waters inside of the SHTF Markers in Sawmill Bay and Jack Bay will be closed for this fishing period.**

MONTAGUE DISTRICT: Waters of the Montague District will open to commercial fishing for a 14-hour fishing period beginning at 7:00 am and ending at 9:00 pm on Sunday, August 12.

NORTHERN DISTRICT: Waters of the Northern District, **excluding waters of the CCH THA and SHA, and excluding waters of the Cannery Creek Subdistrict north of 60° 58.00 N. Lat.,** will open to commercial fishing for a 14-hour commercial fishing period beginning at 7:00 am and ending at 9:00 pm on Sunday, August 12. **Waters inside of all SHTF markers in the Northern District (Long Bay, Granite Bay, Cedar Bay, Wells Bay, Siwash Bay, Jonah Bay and Eaglek Bay) will be closed for this fishing period.**

NORTHWESTERN DISTRICT: Waters of the Northwestern District will open to commercial fishing for a 14-hour fishing period beginning at 7:00 am and ending at 9:00 pm on Sunday, August 12.

SOUTHEASTERN DISTRICT: Waters of the Southeastern District will open to commercial fishing for a 14-hour fishing period beginning at 7:00 am and ending at 9:00 pm on Sunday, August 12.

SOUTHWESTERN DISTRICT: Waters of the Southwestern District south of a latitude line at Squire Point (south Knight Island Passage), east of Point Helen, and waters of the AFK Hatchery THA and SHA **excluding waters of the AFK Hatchery Escapement Exclusion Zone (HEEZ),** will open to commercial fishing for a 14-hour fishing period beginning at 7:00 am and ending at 9:00 pm on Sunday, August 12. **Waters of the AFK Hatchery Escapement Exclusion Zone (HEEZ) within the SHA will be closed during the August 12 fishing period at PWSAC's request.** The AFK Hatchery HEEZ consists of the waters of the SHA west and south of a line from 60° 03.40' N., 148° 03.33' W. to 60° 03.02' N., 148° 02.55' W. This exclusion zone protects potential broodstock fish staging in front of the AFK Hatchery from being harvested in commercial fisheries.

As a reminder, **all salmon that are harvested but not sold by commercial permit holders in Alaska waters must be reported on a fish ticket at the time of landing (SAAC 39.130(c)(10)).** Fish tickets have a "not sold/personal use" field to report these salmon.

The next scheduled salmon fisheries announcement is anticipated to be at 2:00 pm Monday, August 13. Permit holders are advised that unscheduled announcements based on current escapement data may occur at any time inseason.

Announcement recordings are available for **gillnet fisheries at 907-424-7535 and seine fisheries at 907-424-7345. In addition, announcement recordings are available in Anchorage at 267-2843.**

Additionally, announcements, inseason harvest data, and escapement data are available at the following web addresses:
<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=commercialbyareacopperriver.main> (Copper River homepage) or
<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=commercialbyareapws.main> (Prince William Sound homepage).

Unless otherwise specified, all openings are clock openings based on Alaska Daylight Time, which is based on Coordinated Universal Time and may be obtained by calling 303-499-7111.

The department encourages commercial permit holders to renew their licenses early and to check their CFEC vessel registration stickers to make sure that they are current.

The department also encourages permit holders to report observed violations to Wildlife Safeguard at 800-478-3377. Reports are anonymous and cash rewards may be paid for successful prosecution of violations.

PWS commercial fishers are reminded that area fisheries often necessitate fishing in close proximity to marine mammals. Under the Marine Mammals Protection Act (MMPA), the PWS drift gillnet fishery is classified as a Category II fishery. Participants in Category I and II fisheries must be registered in the Marine Mammal Avoidance Program (MMAP) to be authorized for lawful incidental, but not intentional, marine mammal takes during fishing. However, this authorization explicitly does **not** exempt holders of commercial fishing permits from the MMPA prohibition on takes of marine mammals listed as endangered or threatened under the Endangered Species Act. As a participant in the PWS drift gillnet fishery you are automatically registered in the Marine Mammal Authorization Program (MMAP) by the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS). As a participant in a Category II fishery, you must:

- Maintain an MMAP Authorization Certificate, or a photocopy, on board the vessel while engaging in any of the fisheries identified on the reverse side of the certificate. For non-vessel or set net fisheries, the enclosed Certificate, or a photocopy, must be in the possession of the permit holder during fishing operations. This Certificate, in combination with a current, valid state or Federal fishing permit, will serve as your authorization to incidentally take non-endangered or non-threatened marine mammals in the course of commercial fishing operations.
- Report all injuries and mortalities of marine mammals within 48 hours of returning from the trip during which these takes occurred using the MMAP Mortality/Injury Reporting Form (visit http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/pdfs/interactions/mmap_reporting_form.pdf for a copy).

- If so requested, take an observer aboard your vessel.

Purse seine and set gillnet gear are classified as a category III fisheries under the MMPA. Category III fishery participants are automatically exempted from the incidental take prohibition in the MMPA. Therefore, you do not need to maintain the MMAP certificate aboard your vessel, but must report any incidental takes of marine mammals within 48 hours of the incident or your return to port. Such reports must be made on the Marine Mammals Authorization Program Mortality/Injury Reporting Form.

Because some marine mammals are also listed under the Endangered Species Act, incidental takes are also regulated under that act and are not authorized. **All** MMPA category fisheries are liable for incidentally taking ESA listed species.

Please reference http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/pdfs/esa_factsheet.pdf for a list of marine mammals currently listed under the ESA (you should periodically check with the National Marine Fisheries Service for any changes in listed species). Under the ESA, take means to “harass, harm, pursue, hunt, shoot, wound, kill, trap, capture, or collect, or to attempt to engage in any such conduct.” 16U.S.C. 1532(19); and harass means an “intentional or negligent act or omission which creates the likelihood of injury to the wildlife by annoying it to such an extent as to significantly disrupt normal behavioral patterns which include, but are not limited to, breeding, feeding, or sheltering.” (50 C.F.R. 17.3).

To reduce the possibility of incidentally taking an ESA listed species and its associated liability ADF&G recommends that:

- Fishermen participating in area fisheries remain vigilant in monitoring gear when marine mammals may be present.
- Fishermen use avoidance measures (e.g., not fishing or relocating fishing activities when marine mammals are present or likely to be present) to minimize interactions with marine mammals.
- Avoid fishing in areas where marine mammals are likely to be present at night or when visibility or weather conditions make it difficult to spot marine mammals.

For further questions concerning marine mammal regulations call NMFS at 907-271-5006.